Guide to Utah's Alternative and Special Needs School Accountability Report

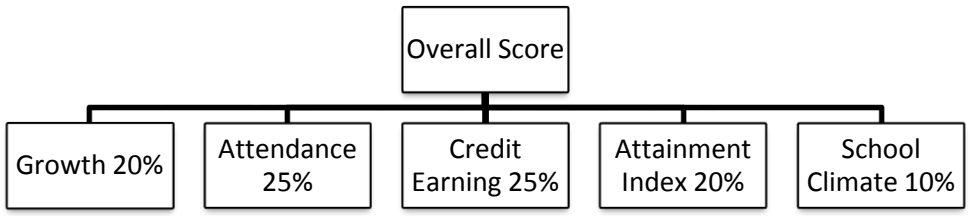
Overview

The Utah Alternative and Special Needs School Accountability Report represents a system for collecting and reporting data for Utah's Alternative and Special Needs schools to inform understanding about school effectiveness. The system is comprised of five main components.

1. **Growth** – a measure of student academic progress based on a school's median student growth percentile for all students and for below proficient students.
2. **Attendance** – a measure which incorporates the school's attendance rate in the current year or improvement in cohort attendance rate from the previous year.
3. **Credit Earning** – a measure of the degree to which students enrolled in the current year are successfully completing courses in which they are enrolled or are making improvement in cohort credit earning rate from the previous year.
4. **Attainment** – a measure of the extent to which students successfully complete or make substantial progress toward completion of meaningful educational goals.
5. **School Climate** – an indicator that signals if a school is collecting data to evaluate school climate and using results to inform efforts to improve climate.

These components are evaluated individually and combined to produce an overall score as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Alternative and Special Needs School Accountability System Structure and Weights



Each of the five components produces a score in accordance with the proscribed weight in the model as shown in Table 1. The component scores are summed to produce a composite score, which has a maximum value of 1500 (or the sum of components possible for the school).

Table 1. Maximum Score Values.

Component	Maximum Score
Growth	300
Attendance	375
Credit Earning	375
Attainment Index	300
School Climate	150
Maximum Possible Score:	1500

Background

Development of Utah's Alternative and Special Needs School Accountability Report began in the spring of 2012 as an outgrowth of work in progress on Utah State Federal Accountability Report (SFAR; formerly UCAS). The project was inspired by recognition that many schools in Utah have a specialized mission and that a uniform approach to accountability for all schools in the state is not sufficient. In order to better gauge the effectiveness of alternative and Special Needs schools, a distinct system comprised of indicators better suited to describe the achievement of these schools was developed.

The Alternative and Special Needs School Accountability Report was developed by a committee led by the Utah State Office of Education and consultants from the National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment. Educators and leaders from many of the state alternative schools served on the committee, which met regularly throughout calendar year 2012. Committee members contributed substantially to the design and evaluation of the system described in this document.

Terms

Alternative School – A school established to serve youth who are not succeeding in a traditional school environment; and designated as an alternative school by the State Board of Education.

Attendance Rate – a student's individual attendance rate is calculated as the number of days attended divided by the number of days enrolled at the reported school. A school attendance rate is the average of each student's attendance rate for all students meeting the enrollment criterion at the reported school.

Credit Earning Rate – a student's individual credit earning rate is calculated as the number of credits earned divided by the number of credits attempted. A school credit earning rate is the average of each student's credit earning rate for all students meeting the enrollment criterion at the reported school.

Below Proficient (BP) Students – Defined as all students who achieve a proficiency level 1 or level 2 in the prior school year in a given content area.

Full Academic Year – Defined as a student who is in membership in a school for a 160 day equivalency.

Growth – Beginning with the 2014 accountability reports, the Student Assessment of Growth and Excellence (SAGE) will be used to determine proficiency and growth. Growth is defined as the median growth percentile (MGP) computed using all individual student growth percentiles (SGP) at a given school for each content area (previously computed for students taking the CRTs and the MAPs tests[1]).

Indicator – A performance component with a reported outcome. There are five indicators in the Alternative and Special Needs School Accountability Report: growth, attendance, credit earning, attainment, and school climate.

N – (n size) The number of students included in the calculation of a metric for an indicator (or sub-indicator). In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), each indicator requires a minimum N count in order for the data to be publicly reportable. The minimum n size required for each indicator is ten (10) students.

[1] Scores from the MAP tests are rescaled to the CRTs first before they are included in the SGP computations.

Special Needs School – a school that only enrolls a student who has at least one of the following disabilities: an intellectual disability; a hearing impairment or deafness; a speech or language impairment; a visual impairment, including blindness; deafblindness; an emotional disturbance; an orthopedic impairment; autism; developmental delay; traumatic brain injury; other health impairment; multiple disabilities; or specific learning disabilities; and has been determined to need placement in a special school by an IEP team.

Sub-indicator – The components underlying each Indicator. For example, growth is made-up of sub-indicators for English Language Arts (ELA), Math, and Science.

Growth

Growth has a 20% influence in the Alternative and Special Needs School Accountability Report score, accounting for a maximum of 300 points. Academic growth is calculated and reported in the exact same manner as is done for the Utah SFAR. For the SFAR framework, an SGP is computed for all students with a minimum of two SAGE scores in a given content area. If a school has a missing sub-indicator for growth (e.g., the school has ELA and Science growth scores but does not meet the minimum n size requirement to report Math), no adjustments are made since the growth points reported is derived by taking the mean across content areas.

Growth Inclusion Rate

In order for growth to be reported in the Alternative and Special Needs School Accountability Report, a minimum inclusion rate of 10% must be met. Specifically, the growth n size at the whole school level for the content area with the highest n size must represent at least 10% of the FAY enrollment of that school. For example:

- School A has a FAY enrollment of 100 students
- 24 of these 100 FAY students have a growth scores in ELA and 20 student have a growth score in mathematics
- The inclusion rate is calculated as 24/100 or 24%. 24 serves as the numerator of the inclusion rate since this represents the largest group of students with a growth score. This school has exceeded the growth inclusion criterion of 10%; therefore growth will be reported.

The minimum n size requirement and inclusion rate requirement are evaluated separately to determine if growth is reported. It is possible to meet the requirement on one but not the other. For example, a school with a FAY enrollment of 20 and growth n size of 8 would have an inclusion rate of 40%, but would not meet the n size requirement for reporting. Conversely, a school with FAY enrollment of 200 and a growth n size of 15 would have an inclusion rate of 7.5%, which is below the 10% threshold, but would meet the n size requirement of 10. Importantly, a school must meet both the inclusion rate criterion of 10% and the n size requirement of 10 in order for growth scores to be reported.

Schools with a Below Proficient sub-group

For schools that have a sufficient number of students in at least one of the subjects to report a below proficient subgroup growth score, the growth performance for two groups in all schools are first assessed separately and then evaluated together. Group 1 consists of all students in the school and group 2 consists of all below proficient students in the school. A total of 200 points is awarded for the performance of all students and an additional 100 points are awarded for below proficient performance. For each group, the median of all growth scores (SGPs) are taken in each content area and evaluated using the rubric presented in Table 2. The MGP is rounded to 2 decimal places.

Table 2: Rubric for Evaluating Median Growth Percentiles by Group

Median Growth Score	All Students (Maximum 200 points)	Below Proficient Students (Maximum 100 points)
<=30	50	25
>30 and <70	(MGP*3.75)-62.50	(MGP*1.875)-31.25
>=70	200	100

As indicated by the rubric:

- Minimum points are awarded to a school if the median growth score achieved by a given group is less than 35.
- Maximum points are awarded if the median growth score is 60 or greater.

This rubric is used for each of the three content areas (ELA, Math, and Science) evaluated.

Example: The median growth percentile of an elementary school for all students and below proficient students is as follows:

Group	ELA Median Growth Achieved	Math Median Growth Achieved	Science Median Growth Achieved
All Students	56	45	65
Below Proficient Students	35	55	50

Using the rubric in Table 2, the median growth score would translate into the following points earned by each group:

Group	ELA Points	Math Points	Science Points	Mean
All Students	150	100	200	**150**
Below Proficient Students	50	75	75	**66.66**

The total growth points earned is computed by summing the points earned by the all students group and the below proficient students subgroup:

Total points = 150 + 66.66 or 216.66 points.

Schools without a Below Proficient sub-group

For schools that do not have a sufficient number of students in at least one of the subjects to report a below proficient subgroup growth score, the total points assigned to all students is adjusted to a 300 point scale. The rubric in Table 3 is used to evaluate the performance of all students at these schools:

Table 3: Rubric applied when BP group is missing

Median Growth Score	Schools without a Below Proficient subgroup: All Students (Maximum 300 points)
<=30	75
>30 and <70	1.5*((MGP*3.75)-62.50)
>=70	300

Attendance

Attendance has a 25% influence in the overall Alternative and Special Needs School Accountability Report score, accounting for a maximum of 375 points. Attendance is comprised of two components 1) attendance rate and 2) improvement in cohort attendance rate.

Attendance Rate

Individual attendance rate is calculated as the number of days attended divided by the number of days enrolled at the reported school. Any value greater than 1 (presumably a data error) is assigned a value of 1. A school attendance rate is the average of each student's attendance rate for all students who are enrolled for a minimum of 90 days in the current year to be included.

Attendance Rate Improvement

To determine improvement in attendance rate the prior year's attendance rate is subtracted from the current year's attendance rate for a matched cohort (panel) of students. There are 5 steps in the process. These will be listed briefly, followed by a detailed explanation.

1. Determine current year attendance rate.
2. Attempt to match each student in #1 with a record in the previous year.
3. Calculate the attendance rate for all matched students in the previous year.
4. Calculate the difference between the current year attendance rate and the prior year attendance rate.
5. Compute an average of each difference score from #4 for the school.

Step 1. The current year rate is calculated as described above. That is, for all students enrolled at the alternative or Special Needs school for a minimum of 90 days the rate is calculated as days attended divided by days enrolled; then, the average of these values is taken for all students at the school.

Step 2. Using this set of current year students enrolled for a minimum of 90 days, an attempt is made to match each record to a previous year at any public school in Utah. A record at any school in which the same student was enrolled for a minimum of 45 days in the previous year is selected for a match. If there are multiple records meeting the 45 prior year enrollment criterion, tie-breakers are applied in the following order until a single record is selected for each student:

1. The record in which the student was enrolled for the longest period of time is selected (e.g. if the student was enrolled at one school for 50 days and at another school for 70 days, the 70 day record is selected).
2. The record with the greatest attendance rate is selected (e.g. if the student was enrolled in two different schools for 70 days each, and was in attendance for 50 days at one and 70 days at the other, the record with 70 days of attendance is selected).

3. The record with the latest exit date is selected (e.g. if the student was enrolled in, and attended two different schools for 70 days each, and exited one in January 2014 and the other in June 2014, the school that the student exited in June 2014 is selected).

Step 3. Once all possible matches are made, attendance rate (days attended divided by days enrolled) is calculated for each student for the prior year.

Step 4. For each matched student the prior year attendance rate is subtracted from the current year attendance rate to produce an attendance rate difference. For example, if student 1 has an attendance rate of .90 in 2012 and .80 in 2011, this student's difference score is .10.
Step 5. Finally, for all matched students, the difference score computed in step 4 is averaged for all students at the school level. See table 4 below for an example of this process for 10 hypothetical students.

Table 4. Attendance Rate Improvement Calculation Example.

	Attendance Rate in 2012	Attendance Rate in 2011	Difference	Average
Student 1	0.71	0.94	-0.23	
Student 2	0.95	0.65	0.30	
Student 3	0.89	0.82	0.07	
Student 4	0.94	0.92	0.02	
Student 5	0.65	0.85	-0.20	
Student 6	0.78	0.45	0.33	
Student 7	0.94	0.91	0.03	
Student 8	0.99	0.78	0.21	
Student 9	0.91	0.91	0.00	
Student 10	0.97	0.82	0.15	0.0680

The final value is rounded to 2 decimal places. Therefore the average attendance improvement rate shown in the example above .0680 (6.8%) is rounded to .07 (7%).

Computing Attendance Points

The final step in the process is to compute an overall attendance score for each student. This is produced by evaluating the attendance rate and the attendance rate improvement value with the rubric in Table 5. For each (rate and improvement), the school is assigned one of four levels, each with an associated point value from 150 to 375 as indicated. The final attendance score reported is the higher of the two levels. For example, if the school has an attendance rate of 85% in the current year (level 3/ 300 points) and improves attendance rate by 5% from the previous year (level 4/ 375 points), the final attendance score for the school is 375.

Table 5. Attendance Rubric.

Attendance Rate	Improvement	Level	Points
Less than 82%	Decline of more than 3%	1	150
>=82% and < 87%	Decline less than or equal to 3%	2	225
>=87% and < 90%	Improvement less than 3%	3	300
90% and above	Improvement of 3% or more	4	375

If the number of valid records for either attendance rate or attendance rate improvement is less than 10, then an overall attendance score is not reported for the school.

Credit Earning

Credit earning has a 25% influence in the overall Alternative and Special Needs School Accountability Report score, accounting for a maximum of 375 points. As with attendance, credit earning is comprised of two components 1) credit earning rate and 2) improvement in cohort credit earning rate.

Credit Earning Rate

Individual credit earning rate is calculated as the number of credits earned divided by the number of credits attempted at the reported school by students in grades 9-12. The number of credits attempted must be greater than zero in order to be included. Any credit earning rate value greater than 1 (presumably a data error) is assigned a value of 1. A school credit earning rate is the average of each student's credit earning rate for all students who are enrolled for a minimum of 90 days in the current year.

Credit Earning Rate Improvement

To determine improvement in credit earning rate, the prior year's credit earning rate among students in grades 9-12 is subtracted from the current year's rate for a matched cohort of students. There are 5 steps in the process, which are listed below followed by a more detailed explanation.

1. Determine current year credit rate.
2. Attempt to match each student in #1 with a grade 9-12 record with enrollment of a minimum of 45 days in the previous year.
3. Calculate the credit earning rate for all matched students in the previous year.
4. Calculate the difference between the current year credit earning rate and the prior year credit earning rate for each student.
5. Compute an average of each difference score from #4 for the school.

Step 1. For all students in grades 9-12 enrolled at the alternative or Special Needs school for a minimum of 90 days the rate is calculated as credits earned divided by credits attempted, if credits attempted > 0. The average of these values is taken for all students at the school.

Step 2. Using this set of current year students enrolled for a minimum of 90 days, an attempt is made to match each record to a previous year at any public school in Utah. A record at any school in which the same student was enrolled in grades 9-12 for a minimum of 45 days in the previous year is selected for a match. If there are multiple records meeting the 45 day criterion for prior year enrollment, tie-breakers are applied in the following order until a single record is selected for each student:

1. The record in which the student was enrolled for the longest period of time is selected (e.g. if the student was enrolled at one school for 50 days and at another school for 70 days, the 70 day record is selected).
2. The record with the greatest attendance rate is selected (e.g. if the student was enrolled in two different schools for 70 days each, and was in attendance for 50 days at one and 70 days at the other, the record with 70 days of attendance is selected).
3. The record with the latest exit date is selected (e.g. if the student was enrolled in, and attended two different schools for 70 days each, and exited one in January 2014 and the other in June 2014, the school that the student exited in June 2014 is selected).

Step 3. Once all possible matches are made, credit earning rate (credits earned divided by credits attempted if credits attempted > 0) is calculated for each student for the prior year.

Step 4. For each matched student the prior year credit earning rate is subtracted from the current year credit earning rate to produce a credit earning rate difference. For example, if student 1 has a credit earning rate of .75 in 2012 and .50 in 2011, this student's credit earning rate difference is .25.

Step 5. Finally, for all matched students, the credit earning rate difference computed in step 4 is averaged for all students at the school level. See Table 6 below for an example of this process for 10 hypothetical students.

Table 6. Credit Rate Improvement Calculation Example.

	Credit Earning Rate in 2012	Credit Earning Rate in 2011	Credit Earning Rate Difference	Average
Student 1	0.75	0.50	0.25	
Student 2	0.50	0.50	0.00	
Student 3	1.00	1.00	0.00	
Student 4	1.00	0.50	0.50	
Student 5	0.90	1.00	-0.10	
Student 6	0.66	0.50	0.16	
Student 7	0.25	0.25	0.00	
Student 8	0.75	0.25	0.50	
Student 9	0.80	1.00	-0.20	
Student 10	1.00	0.75	0.25	0.1360

The final value is rounded to 2 decimal places. Therefore the average credit earning improvement rate shown in the example above .1360 (13.6%) is rounded to .14 (14%).

Computing Credit Earning Points

The final step in the process is to compute a total credit earning score for each school. This is produced by evaluating the credit earning rate and the credit earning rate improvement value with the rubric in Table 7. For each (rate and improvement), the school is assigned one of four levels, each with an associated point value from 150 to 375 as indicated. The final credit earning score reported is the

higher of the two levels. For example, if a school has a credit earning rate of 82% in the current year (level 3/ 300 points) but declines 5% from the previous year (level 2/ 225 points), the final credit earning score for the school is 300.

If the number of valid records (n size) for both credit earning rate and credit earning rate improvement is less than 10, then a total credit earning value is not reported for the school.

Table 7. Credit Earning Rubric.

Credit Earning Rate	Improvement	Level	Points
Less than 70%	Decline of more than 10%	1	150
>=70% and <80%	Decline less than or equal to 10%	2	225
>=80% and <90%	Improvement less than 10%	3	300
90% and above	Improvement of 10% or more	4	375

Attainment Index

The fourth indicator in the model is the attainment index, which accounts for 20% influence or a maximum of 300 points per school. The attainment index specifies certain exit outcomes for every student each of which is associated with a point value as shown in Table 8.

Every student who is enrolled for any period of time at an alternative or Special Needs school and who has a high school completion status or exit code that corresponds to any of the included categories is assigned the associated points in Table 8. If a student has neither a high school completion status nor an exit code he/she is excluded from the calculation. If a student has both a high school completion status and an exit code, then use the high school completion status. If there are multiple records for a student (in a single school and/or from more than one alternative or Special Needs school) during the school year he/she should be included in the attainment index for only one of the schools; select the high school completion status or exit code from the record with the latest exit date. Tie-breakers are applied in the following order until a single record is selected for each student:

1. Select records where the high school completion status and exit code are not both blank or null
2. The record with the latest exit date is selected (e.g. if the student was enrolled in, and attended two different schools, and exited one in January 2014 and the other in June 2014, the school that the student exited in June 2014 is selected).
3. The record in which the student was enrolled for the longest period of time is selected (e.g. if the student was enrolled at one school for 50 days and at another school for 70 days, the 70 day record is selected).
4. The record with the greatest attendance rate is selected (e.g. if the student was enrolled in two different schools for 70 days each, and was in attendance for 50 days at one and 70 days at the other, the record with 70 days of attendance is selected).

The school's final attainment index point value is simply the average of all points for all students if the n size is 10 or greater. If the n size is less than 10, an attainment index score is not reported.

It is important to note that some exit codes are excluded from the attainment index computation. That is, if a student has an exit code listed in the last row of Table 8, that record is simply omitted from the attainment index calculation.

Table 8. Exit Codes and Points in the Attainment Index Calculations.

Included codes	Points
Graduate (Early, Carnegie, Military, and Other)	300
GED (GG) and Other Completers (AO, CT, G3)	250
Transferred to Higher Ed or UCAT	250
Transferred (within School, District, to Charter, and under NCLB)	150
Transferred to Adult Ed	150
Retained Senior	150
Dropout (dropped out, expelled, exited to take the GED, graduation pending, unknown, unable to determine status, and withdrew)	0
Excluded codes	**Points**
Died, transferred to homeschool or private school, transferred out of state or country, foreign exchange student, withdrew for medical reasons	NA

An example based on a school with 15 hypothetical students is shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Attainment Index Example.

Student	Exit Code	Score	Average
Student 1	Graduate	300	
Student 2	Dropout	0	
Student 3	GED	250	
Student 4	Transferred Out of State	NA	
Student 5	Transferred to Higher Ed	250	
Student 6	Transferred within District	150	
Student 7	GED	250	
Student 8	Dropout	0	150
Student 9	Transferred District	150	
Student 10	Unknown	0	
Student 11	Withdraw	0	
Student 12	Graduate	300	
Student 13	Graduate	300	
Student 14	Dropout	0	
Student 15	Transferred within District	150	

Note that student 4 is excluded from the calculation. Therefore, the final index value of 150 is reported based on 14 students with exit outcomes that are included in the index.

School Climate

The fifth component of the Alternative and Special Needs School Accountability Report is school climate, which accounts for 10% influence or a maximum of 150 points. The purpose of this category is to signal the importance of measuring school climate, evaluating the outcomes of that measure, and taking action based on those outcomes.

Very simply, schools receive the full 150 points if they accurately report an affirmative response to the following statements.

1. Did the school administer a survey to measure school climate in the current academic year?
2. If yes, did the school review data and take action to improve school climate?

Schools that do not report an affirmative response to both questions are assigned zero points for this indicator.

Computing and Reporting Scores

A Total Score and Total Score Possible is reported for each component that meets the minimum n size criterion and/or the minimum inclusion rate requirement. The Composite Score is simply the sum of the points for each of the five indicators. The Total Points Possible is the sum of points possible for the included components (some may be excluded due to not meeting the minimum n size criterion and/or the minimum inclusion rate requirement).

Any components or sub-components with n sizes of less than 10 should be displayed as “n<10”. If the component cannot be calculated, due to not meeting the minimum n size and/or inclusion rate, the Total Score and Total Score Possible for that component should be displayed as ‘NA’.